

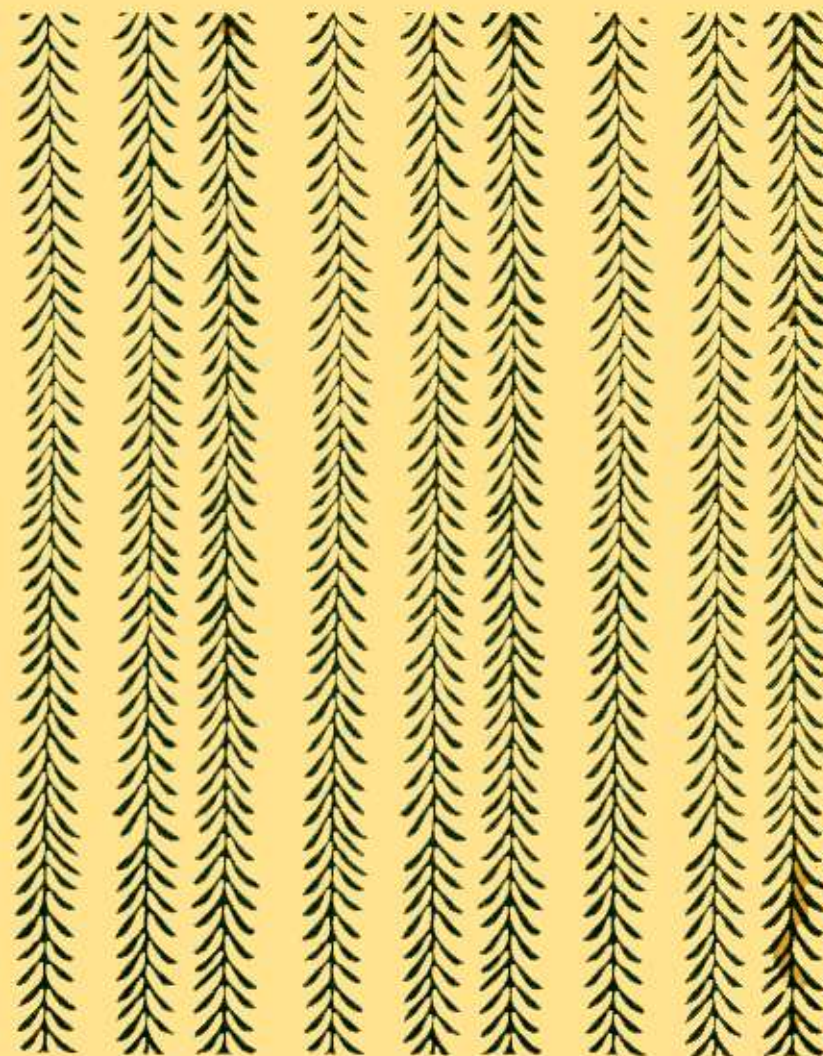


HUNDRED POEMS

The object of this small anthology is to gather a few simple delights from the treasures of English poetry for Indian readers who have not studied much English, and the growing number of Indian students who experience an urge to learn the language.

Lyric poetry is among the most notable contributions made by the English people to Western culture. It is also a rich legacy left behind in India by the British. Gathered in this book are a hundred poems, one each by a hundred British and American poets born before the twentieth century.

*



HUNDRED POEMS

HUNDRED POEMS

SELECTED BY
MAHENDRA MEGHANI

LOK-MILAP TRUST

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For
Tirusha and Sumir
Yash and Tanya

*

To be young is
to be as one of the immortals.

William Hazlitt

*

They are angels of God in disguise,
The sunlight sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still gleams in their eyes.

Charles M. Dickinson

*

To dread no eye,
and to suspect no tongue,
is the greatest prerogative
of innocence.

Samuel Johnson

[3]

Editor's Note

How beautiful is youth ! how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams ! ∞
In its sublime audacity of faith,
"Be thou removed" it to the mountain saith;
And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,
Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud !

Henry W. Longfellow

*

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds.

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs.

A poem should be equal to:
Not true.

A poem should not mean
But be.

Archibald MacLeish

*

One sees a poor, heavily laden creature
with a bundle of fagots
advancing from a narrow path in the fields.
The manner in which this figure
comes suddenly before me
is a momentary reminder of
the fundamental condition of human life : TOIL.
On the tilled land around,
One watches figures hoeing and digging.
It is here that I find the great poetry.

Jean-Francois Millet

Delight is the chief end of poetry, as John Dryden put it. The object of this small anthology is to gather a few simple delights from the treasures of English poetry for Indian readers who have not studied much English, and the growing number of Indian students who experience an urge to learn the language.

Lyric poetry is among the most notable contributions made by the English people to Western culture. It is also a rich legacy left behind in India by the British. Gathered in this book are a hundred poems, one each by a hundred British and American poets born before the twentieth century.

The editor's hope is to inspire perhaps a little more interest in English poetry among a few more young Indian readers, as also to serve those who already love it. He can only hope that readers may find half the pleasure that he has found in reading and re-reading the pieces for this anthology.

If any poems are found here that are not fully understood at first reading, it is hoped that the understanding will grow with the reader who initially finds some pleasure in them. As William Blake recalled, "The wisest of the ancients considered what is not too explicit as the fittest for instruction, because it rouses the faculties to act." In our own age Carl Sandburg has described poetry as "the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess what is seen during a moment."

One of the greatest pleasures of poetry is the discovery that a poem which you have always known means far more than you could realize when you first met it and liked it. This is a process that goes on as long as we read poetry at all : nobody can read a great poet again, without finding that his experience now led him to new meanings in the familiar words.

It is hoped that this little book may provide a tiny fountain of innocent and exalted pleasure, and sweeten solitude itself with the companionship of the wise and the good, with the beauty which the eye cannot see, and the music only heard in silence.

Some poems have been extracted, with the utmost respect to their authors, in the hope that the pieces may thus be able to provide greater delight. Spelling has been Americanized to make it less distracting for Indian students. If we have borrowed a whole language from England, we may as well borrow some of its simplified spelling from America.

The poets are arranged chronologically. Those poets whose dates of birth could not be ascertained have been placed alphabetically at the end of the book. Anonymous poems are given in the beginning.

The pieces chosen have been repeatedly considered by one who may humbly claim a layman's unrefined love for not-too learned poetry. He is immeasurably indebted to some of the great anthologists of English poetry including Francis Palgrave (*The Golden Treasury*), Helen Gardener (*The Oxford Book of English Verse*) and M.L.Rosenthal (*Poetry in English*) from whose labors he has benefitted. Even this note reflects some of their thoughts, more or less in their own words.

Milton's birth-anniversary : 93-12-09 Mahendra Meghani

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A WAS AN ARCHER

A was an Archer
 who shot at a frog
 B was a Butcher
 who kept a bull-dog
 C was a Captain
 all covered with lace
 D was a Drummer
 who played with much grace
 E was an Esquire
 with pride on his brow
 F was a Farmer
 who followed the plough
 G was a Gamester
 who had but ill-luck
 H was a Hunter
 and hunted a buck
 I was an Italian
 who had a white mouse
 J was a Joiner
 and build up a house
 K was a King
 so mighty and grand
 L was a Lady
 who had a white hand
 M was a Miser
 who hoarded up gold
 N was a Nobleman
 gallant and bold

O was an Organ boy
 who played about town
 P was a Parson
 who wore a black gown
 Q was a Queen
 who was fond of her people
 R was a Robin
 who perched on a steeple
 S was a Sailor
 who spent all he got
 T was a Tinker
 who mended a pot
 U was an Usher
 who loved little boys
 V was a Veteran
 who sold pretty toys
 W was a Watchman
 who guarded the door
 X was eXpensive
 and so became poor
 Y was a Youth
 who did not love school
 Z was a Zany
 who looked a great fool

Anonymous

*

AS WET AS A FISH—

As wet as a fish—as dry as a bone;
 As live as a bird—as dead as a stone; ^{ooo}
 As hard as a flint—as soft as a mole;
 As white as a lily—as black as a coal; ^{ooo}
 As heavy as lead—as light as a feather;
 As steady as time—uncertain as weather;
 As hot as a furnace—as cold as a frog;
 As gay as a lark—as sick as a dog;
 As slow as a tortoise—as swift as the wind;
 As true as the gospel—as false as mankind;
 As thin as a herring—as fat as a pig;
 As proud as a peacock—as blithe as a grig;
 As fierce as a tiger—as mild as a dove;
 As stiff as a poker—as limp as a glove;
 As blind as a bat—as deaf as a post;
 As cool as a cucumber—as warm as a toast; ^{ooo}
 As straight as an arrow—as bent as a bow;
 As yellow as saffron—as black as a sloe; ^{ooo}
 As brisk as a bee—as dull as an ass;
 As full as a tick—as solid as brass.

Anonymous

*

THE FATHER'S TREASURE

As round their dying father's bed
His sons attend, the peasant said :
"Children, deep hid from prying eyes,
A treasure in my vineyard lies;
When you have laid me in the grave,
Dig, search—and your reward you'll have."
"Father," cries one, "but where's the spot ?"
—He sighs ! he sinks ! but answers not.

The tedious burial service o'er,
Home hie his sons, and straight explore
Each corner of the vineyard round;
Dig up, beat, break, and sift the ground;
Yet though to search so well inclined,
Nor gold, nor treasure could they find;
But when the autumn next drew near,
A double vintage crowned the year.
"Now," quoth the peasant's wisest son,
"Our father's legacy is known,
In yon rich purple grapes 'tis seen,
Which, but for digging, ne'er had been.
"Then let us all reflect with pleasure,
That labor is the source of treasure."

Anonymous

*

FOR WANT OF A NAIL

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of the shoe, the horse was lost;

For want of the horse, the rider was lost;
For want of the rider, the battle was lost;
For want of the battle, the kingdom was lost.
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

Anonymous

*

HORSE SENSE

A horse can't pull while kicking.
This fact I merely mention.
And he can't kick while pulling,
Which is my chief contention.

Let's imitate the good old horse
And lead a life that's fitting;
Just pull an honest load, and then
There'll be no time for kicking.

Anonymous

*

IF ALL THE SEAS WERE ONE SEA

If all the seas were one sea,
What a great sea that would be !
If all the trees were one tree,
What a great tree that would be !

And if all the axes were one axe,
What a great big axe that would be !
And if all the men were one man,
What a great man that would be !

And if the great man took the great axe
And cut down the great tree,
And let it fall into the great sea,
What a splish-splash that would be !

Anonymous

*

LIVING

To touch the cup with eager lips and taste—not
drain it;
To woo and tempt and court a bliss—and not
attain it;
To fondle and caress a joy, yet hold it lightly,
Lest it become necessity and cling too tightly;
To watch the sun set in the west without regretting;
To hail its advent in the east—the night forgetting;
To smother care in happiness and grief in laughter;
To hold the present close—not questioning hereafter;
To have enough to share—to know the joy of giving;
To thrill with all the sweets of life—is living.

Anonymous

*

THE HAPPY LIFE

∞∞∞ The things for to attain
The happy life be these, I find :
The riches left, not got with pain;
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind;
The equal friend; no grudge nor strife;∞∞∞
Without disease the healthful life;∞∞∞

The mean diet, no delicate fare;
Wisdom joined with simplicity;∞∞
Contended with thine own estate;
Neither wish death, nor fear his might.

Henry Howard (1517)

*

MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS

My mind to me a kingdom is
Such perfect joy therein I find,
That it excels all other bliss
That world affords or grows by kind.
Though much I want which most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave. ∞∞

I see how plenty suffers oft,
And hasty climbers soon do fall;
I see that those which are aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all;
They get with toil, they keep with fear;
Such cares my mind could never bear. ∞∞

Some have too much, yet still do crave,
I little have, and seek no more :
They are but poor, though much they have,
And I am rich with little store :
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss,
I grudge not at another's gain;
No worldly waves my mind can toss,
My state at one doth still remain,

I fear no foe, I fawn no friend;
 I loathe not life, nor dread no end. ∞
 My wealth is health and perfect ease,
 My conscience clear my chief defense;
 I neither seek by bribes to please,
 Nor by desert to breed offence.
 Thus do I live, thus will I die;
 Would all did so, as well as I.

Edward Dyer (1543)

*

THE CORN

The corn, that in the ground is sown, first dies,
 And of one seed do many ears arise;
 Love, this world's corn, by dying multiples.

Michael Drayton (1563)

*

WHEN IN DISGRACE...

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state, ∞
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate, ∞
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
 For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

William Shakespeare (1564)

*

THE MAN OF LIFE UPRIGHT

The man of life upright,
 Whose guiltless heart is free
 From all dishonest deeds
 Or thought of vanity :

The man whose silent days
 In harmless joy are spent,
 Whom hopes cannot delude,
 Nor sorrow discontent : ∞

He only can behold
 With unaffrightened eyes
 The horrors of the deep
 And terrors of the skies.

Thus scorning all the cares
 That fate or fortune brings,
 He makes the heaven his book,
 His wisdom heavenly things,

Good thoughts his only friends,
 His wealth a well-spent age,
 The earth his sober inn
 And quiet pilgrimage.

Thomas Campion (1567)

*

SONG IN TIME OF PLAGUE

Adieu, farewell earth's bliss !
 This world uncertain is :
 Fond are life's lustful joys,

HUNDRED POEMS

Death proves them all but toys.
None from his darts can fly;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us !

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade;
All things to end are made;
The plague full shift goes by;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us !

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eyes;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us !^{ooo}

Haste therefore each degree
To welcome destiny;
Heaven is our heritage,
Earth but a player's stage.
Mount we unto the sky;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us !

Thomas Nashe (1567)

*

A HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill !

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath. ^{ooo}

Who hath his life from rumors freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great. ^{ooo}

— This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall :
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing yet hath all.

Henry Wotton (1568)

*

THE PLAY

My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;
Judge not the play before the play is done :
Her plot has many changes; every day
Speaks a new scene; the last act crowns the play.

Frances Quarles (1592)

*

ON HIS BLINDNESS

∞ God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

John Milton (1608)

*

CONTEMPLATIONS

When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth, though old, still clad in green,
The stones and trees insensible of time,
Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen. ∞
But man grows old, lies down, remains where once
he's laid :

Shall I, then, praise the heavens, the trees, the earth,
Because their beauty and their strength last longer ?
Shall I wish there or never to had birth,
Because they're bigger, and their body stronger ?
Nay, they shall darken, perish, fade, and die,
And when unmade so ever shall they lie :
But man was made for endless immortality.

Anne Bradstreet (1612)

*

CONTENTMENT

He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide. ∞

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much :
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage :
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

John Bunyan (1628)

*

THE BLIND BOY

O say what is that thing call'd Light,
Which I must ne'er enjoy;
What are the blessings of the sight,
O tell your poor blind boy !

You talk of wondrous things you see,
You say the sun shines bright;
I feel him warm, but how can he
Or make it day or night ?

My day or night myself I make
Whene'er I sleep or play;

And could I ever keep awake
With me 'twere always day.
With heavy sighs I often hear
You mourn my hapless woe;
But sure with patience I can bear
A loss I ne'er can know.

Then let not what I cannot have
My cheer of mind destroy :
Whilst thus I sing, I am a king,
Although a poor blind boy.

Colley Cibber (1671)

*

THE QUIET LIFE

Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter, fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years, slide soft away
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation,

And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

Alexander Pope (1688)

*

THE DRUM

I hate that drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round :
To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields,
And lures from cities and from fields,
To sell their liberty for charms
Of tawdry lace, and glittering arms;
And when Ambition's voice commands,
To march, and fight, and fall, in foreign lands.

I hate that drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round :
To me it talks of ravaged plains,
And burning towns, and ruined swains,
And mangled limbs, and dying groans,
And widows' tears, and orphans' moans;
And all that Misery's hand bestows
To fill the catalog of human woes.

John Scott Of Amwell (1730)

*

TIME

Time's an hand's-breadth; 'tis a tale;
'Tis a vessel under sail;
'Tis an eagle in its way,
Darting down upon its prey;
'Tis an arrow in its flight,
Mocking the pursuing sight;
'Tis a short-lived fading flower;
'Tis a rainbow on a shower;
'Tis a momentary ray,
Smiling in a winter's day;
'Tis a torrent's rapid stream;
'Tis a shadow, 'tis a dream;
'Tis the closing watch of night,
Dying at the rising light;
'Tis a bubble; 'tis a sigh :
Be prepared, O Man ! to die.

John Wynne (1743)

*

A STATE

What constitutes a state ?
Not high-raised battlement or labored mound,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned;
Not bays and broad-armed ports,
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;
Not starred and spangled courts,
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.

No : — men, high-minded men,
With powers as far above dull brutes endued
In forest, brake, or den,
As beast excel cold rocks and brambles rude,—
Men who their duties know,
But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain,
Prevent the long-aimed blow,
And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain:
These constitute a state;
And sovereign law, that state's collected will,
O'er thrones and globes elate
Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.
Smit by her sacred frown,
The fiend, Dissension, like a vapor sinks;
And e'en the all-dazzling crown
Hides his faint rays, and at her bidding shrinks.

William Jones (1746)

*

THE SCHOOLBOY

I love to rise in a summer morn
When the birds sing on every tree.
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the sky-lark sings with me.
O ! What sweet company.
But to go to school in a summer morn,
O ! it drives all joy away;
Under a cruel eye outworn,

The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay. ∞

How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing ?
How can a child, when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring ?

O ! father and mother, if buds are nip'd
And blossoms blown away,
And if the tender plants are strip'd
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and care's dismay,
How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear ?
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear ?

William Blake (1757)

*

PATRIOTISM

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said :
This is my own, my native land !
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand ! ∞

Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires ! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand !

Walter Scott (1771)

*

A FAMOUS VICTORY

It was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.
She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
'Tis some poor fellow's skull, said he,
Who fell in the great victory.

I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about,
And often when I go to plough,

The ploughshare turns them out;
For many thousand men, said he,
Were slain in the great victory.

Now tell us what 'twas all about,
Young Peterkin, he cries,
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
Now tell us all about the war,
And what they killed each other for.

It was the English, Kaspar cried,
That put the French to rout;
But what they killed each other for,
I could not well make out;
But everybody said, quoth he,
That it was a famous victory.

My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died.
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory. ∞

Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene. —
Why 'twas a very wicked thing !

Said little Wilhelmine.
Nay—nay—my little girl, quoth he,
It was a famous victory.

And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win.
But what good came of it at last ?
Quoth little Peterkin.
Why that I cannot tell, said he,
But 'twas a famous victory.

Robert Southey (1774)

*

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

Oft in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me :
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken !
Thus in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

Thomas Moore (1779)

*

MY MOTHER

Who fed me from her gentle breast,
And hushed me in her arms to rest,
And on my cheek sweet kisses prest ?
My Mother.

When sleep forsook my open eye,
Who was it sung sweet hushaby,
And rocked me that I should not cry ?
My Mother. ∞∞

When pain and sickness made me cry,
Who gazed upon my heavy eye,
And wept, for fear that I should die ?
My Mother.

When thou art feeble, old, and grey,
My healthy arm shall be thy stay,
And I will soothe thy pains away,
My Mother.

Ann Taylor (1782)

*

ABOU BEN ADHEM

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase !)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold : —
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said :

“What writest thou ?”—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, “The names of those who love the Lord.”
“And is mine one ?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, “I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.”
The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo : Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.

James Hunt (1784)

*

HOME, SWEET HOME

’Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne’er met with
elsewhere.

Home, home, sweet, sweet home !
There’s no place like home, oh, there’s no place
like home !

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again !
The birds singing gayly, that came at my call—
Give me them—and the peace of mind, dearer
than all !

Home, home, sweet, sweet home !

There's no place like home, oh, there's no place
like home !

I gaze on the moon as I tread the drear wild,
And feel that my mother now thinks of her child,
As she looks on that moon from our own cottage door
Thro' the woodbine, whose fragrance shall cheer me
no more.

Home, home, sweet, sweet home !
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place
like home !

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile !
Let others delight 'mid new pleasure to roam,
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of home,
Home, home, sweet, sweet home !
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place
like home !

To thee I'll return overburdened with care;
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam;
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home, home, sweet, sweet home !
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place
like home !

John Payne (1792)

*

CASABIANCA

[Young Casabianca, son of the Admiral of the Orient,
remained at his post after the ship had taken fire and
all the guns had been abandoned, and perished in the
explosion of the vessel.]

The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence all but him had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud though childlike form.

The flames rolled on; he would not go
Without his father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud, "Say, Father, say,
If yet my task be done !"
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.

"Speak, Father !" once again he cried,
"If I may yet be gone !"
And but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair,
And looked from that lone post of death
In still yet brave despair;

And shouted but once more aloud,
"My father ! must I stay ?"
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendor wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child,
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder sound;
The boy,—Oh ! where was *he* ?
Ask of the winds, that far around
With fragments strewed the sea,—

With shroud and mast and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part,—
But the noblest thing that perished there
Was that young, faithful heart.

***Felicia Hemans* (1793)**

*

THE MOTHER'S DREAM

I'd a dream to-night
As I fell asleep,
Oh ! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep :
Of my little lad,
Gone to leave me sad,
Aye, the child I had,
But was not to keep.

As in heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh ! it did not burn;
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half turned about,
"Your tears put it out;
Mother, never mourn."

***William Barness* (1801)**

*

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on !
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on !

Keep thou my feet ! I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now

Lead thou me on !
 I loved the garish day; and, spite of tears,
 Pride ruled my will : remember not past years.
 So long thy power has blest me, sure it still
 Will lead me on
 O'er moor and fen, O'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone;
 And with the morn those angel faces smile,
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

John H. Newman (1801)

*

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SQUIRREL

The mountain and the squirrel
 Had a quarrel;
 And the former called the latter "Little Prig".
 Bun replied,
 "You are doubtless very big;
 But all sorts of things and weather
 Must be taken in together,
 To make up a year
 And a sphere.
 "And I think it no disgrace
 To occupy my place.
 If I'm not so large as you,
 You are not so small as I,
 And not half so spry.
 "I'll not deny you make
 A very pretty squirrel track;

Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
 If I cannot carry forests on my back,
 Neither can you crack a nut."

Ralph W. Emerson (1803)

*

A PLACE IN THY MEMORY

A place in thy memory, dearest,
 Is all that I claim,
 To pause and look back when thou hearest
 The sound of my name.

Another may woo thee nearer,
 Another may win and wear;
 I care not, though he be dearer,
 If I am remembered there. ∞

Remember me not as a lover
 Whose fond hopes are crossed,
 Whose bosom can never recover
 The light it has lost;

As the young bride remembers the mother
 She loves, yet never may see,
 As a sister remembers a brother,
 Oh, dearest, remember me.

Gerald Griffin (1803)

*

AMBITION

What is ambition ? 'Tis a glorious cheat !
It seeks the chamber of the gifted boy,
And lifts his humble window, and comes in;
The narrow walls expand, and spread away
Into a kingly palace, and the roof
Lifts to the sky, and unseen fingers work
The ceilings with rich blazonry, and write
His name in burning letters over all.
And ever, as he shuts his wildered eyes,
The phantom comes and lays upon his lids
A spell that murders sleep, and in his ear
Whispers a deathless word, and on his brain
Breathes a fierce thirst no waters will allay.
He is its slave henceforth. His days are spent
In chaining down his heart, and watching where
To rise by human weaknesses. His nights
Bring him no rest in all their blessed hours.
His kindred are forgotten or estranged;
Unhealthful fires burn constant in his eye.
His lip grows restless, and its smile is curled
Half into scorn : till the bright, fiery boy,
That 'twas a daily blessing but to see,
His spirit was so bird-like and so pure,
Is frozen, in the very flush of youth,
Into a cold, care-fretted, heartless *man*.
And what is its reward ? At best, a name !
Praise — when the ear has grown too dull to hear;
Gold — when the senses it should please are dead;
Wreaths — when the hair they cover has grown gray;
Fame — when the heart it should have thrilled is numb;

*All things but love — when love is all we want;
And close behind comes Death, and ere we know,
That even these unavailing gifts are ours,
He sends us, stripped and naked, to the grave.*

Nathaniel P. Willis (1806)

*

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.
His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.
Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.
And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,

And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise !
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, — rejoicing, — sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes.
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught !
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.

Henry W. Longfellow (1807)

*

IN SCHOOL-DAYS

Still sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sleeping;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry vines are creeping.

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing !

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favor singled;
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered —
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word :
I hate to go above you,
Because, "— the brown eyes lower fell —
"Because, you see, I love you !"

Still memory to a grey-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl ! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing.

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her, — because they love him.

John G. Whittier (1807)

*

TRUST

Better trust all and be deceived,
And weep that trust and that deceiving,
Than doubt one heart, that if believed
Had blessed one's life with true believing.

Oh, in this mocking world too fast
The doubting friend o'ertakes our youth;
Better be cheated to the last
Than lose the blessed hope of truth.

Frances A. Kemble (1809)

*

THEN LAUGH

Build for yourself a strong box,
Fashion each part with care;
When it's strong as your hand can make it,
Put all your troubles there;
Hide there all thought of your failures,
And each bitter cup that you quaff;
Lock all your heartaches within it,
Then sit on the lid and laugh.

Tell no one else its contents,
Never its secrets share;
When you've dropped in your care and worry,
Keep them forever there;
Hide them from sight so completely
That the world will never dream half;
Fasten the strong box securely—
Then sit on the lid and laugh.

Bertha A. Backus (fl. 1811)

*

THE PATRIOT

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad;
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway;
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells;
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries;

Had I said "Good folk, mere noise repels;
But give me your sun from yonder skies !"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else ?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun,
To give it my loving friends to keep;
Nought man could do have I left undone;
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sights is, all allow,
At the Shamble's Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go !
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead;
"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me ?"—God might question. Now, instead,
'Tis God shall repay : I am safer so.

Robert Browning (1812)

*

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the elephant,
And, happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl :
"God bless me ! but the elephant
Is nothing but a wall !"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried : "Ho ! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp ?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear !"

The Third approached the animal,
And, happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake :
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a snake !"

The Fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee :
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;

"Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree."

The Fifth, who changed to touch the ear,
Said : "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan !"

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a rope !"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong !

So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
*And prate about an elephant
Not one of them has seen !*

John Saxe (1816)

*

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning,
That brightens up the sky;

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

Cecil F. Alexander (1818)

*

WHERE LIES THE LAND ?

Where lies the land to which the ship would go ?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.

And where the land she travels from ? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noon upon the deck's smooth face,
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace;
Or, o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights when wild north-westerns rave,
How proud a thing to fight with the wind and wave !
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go ?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from ? Away
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

Arthur H. Clough (1819)

*

COUNT THAT DAY LOST

If you sit down at set of sun
And count the acts that you have done,
And, counting, find
One self-denying deed, one word
That eased the heart of him who heard;
One glance most kind,
That fell like sunshine where it went —
Then you may count that day well spent.
But if, through all the livelong day,
You've cheered no heart, by yea or nay —

If, through it all
You've nothing done that you can trace
That brought the sunshine to one face —
No act most small
That helped some soul and nothing cost —
Then count that day as worse than lost.

George Eliot (1819)

*

GOD, GIVE US MEN !

God, give us men ! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready
hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without
winking !

Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, lo ! freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land and waiting Justice sleeps.

Josiah G. Holland (1819)

*

STANZAS ON FREEDOM

Men ! whose boast it is that ye
Come of fathers brave and free,
If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are you truly free and brave ?
If ye do not feel the chain,
When it works a brother's pain,
Are ye not base slaves indeed —
Slaves unworthy to be freed ?

Is true freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And, with leathern hearts, forget
That we owe mankind a debt ?
No ! true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand , to be
Earnest to make others free !

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truths they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

James R. Lowell (1819)

*

NOVEMBER

The leaves are fading and falling,
The winds are rough and wild,
The birds have ceased their calling,
But let me tell you, my child.

Though day by day, as it closes,
Doth darker and colder grow,
The roots of the bright red roses
Will keep alive in the snow.

And when the Winter is over,
The boughs will get new leaves,
The quail come back to the clover,
And the swallow back to the eaves. 000

The leaves to-day are whirling,
The brooks are dry and dumb,
But let me tell you, my darling,
The Spring will be sure to come. 000

So, when some dear joy loses
Its beauteous summer flow,
Think how the roots of the roses
Are kept alive in the snow.

Alice Cary (1820)

*

LITTLE THINGS

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the beauteous land.
And the little moments,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.

Julia A. Carney (1823)

*

THIS WARM WORLD

You promise heavens free from strife, ooo
But sweet sweet is this human life, ooo
Your chilly stars I can forgo,
This warm kind world is all I know. ooo
All beauteous things for which we live
By laws of time and space decay.
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.

William Cory (1823)

*

NO FUNERAL GLOOM

No funeral gloom, my dears, when I am gone,
Corpse-gazing, tears, black raiment, grave-yard
grimness.
Think of me as withdrawn into the dimness, yours
still, you mine.
Remember all the best of our past moments and
forget the rest,
And so to where I wait come gently on.

William Allingham (1824)

*

MY MOTHER'S GARDEN

Her heart is like her garden,
Old fashioned, quaint and sweet,
With here a wealth of blossoms,
And there a still retreat.
Sweet violets are hiding,
We know as we pass by,
And lilies, pure as angel thoughts,
Are opening somewhere high.
Forget-me-nots there linger,
To full perfection brought,
And there bloom purple pansies
In many a tender thought.
There love's own roses blossom,
As from enchanted ground,
And lavish perfume exquisite
The whole glad year around.

And in that quiet garden —
The garden of her heart —
Song birds are always singing
Their songs of cheer apart.
And from it floats for ever,
O'ercoming sin and strife,
Sweet as the breath of roses blown,
The fragrance of her life.

Elizabeth A. Allen (1832)

*

A LITTLE WORK

A little work, a little play
To keep us going — and so, good-day !
A little warmth, a little light
Of love's bestowing — and so, good-night !
A little fun, to match the sorrow
Of each day's growing — and so, good-morrow !
A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing ! And so — good-bye !

George du Maurier (1834)

*

BEAUTIFUL THINGS

Beautiful faces are those that wear —
It matters little if dark or fair —
Whole-souled honesty printed there.

Beautiful eyes are those that show,
Like crystal panes where hearth fires glow,
Beautiful thoughts that burn below.

Beautiful lips are those whose words
Leap from the heart like songs of birds,
Yet whose utterance prudence girds.

Beautiful hands are those that do
Work that is honest and brave and true,
Moment by moment the long day through.

Beautiful feet are those that go,
On kindly ministries to and fro,
Down lowliest ways, if God wills it so.

Beautiful shoulders are those that bear
Ceaseless burdens of homely care
With patient grace and daily prayer.

Beautiful lives are those that bless
Silent rivers of happiness,
Whose hidden fountains but few may guess.

Beautiful twilight at set of sun,
Beautiful goal with race well won,
Beautiful rest with work well done.

Beautiful graves where grasses creep,
Where brown leaves fall, where drifts lie deep
Over worn-out hands — oh ! beautiful sleep !

Ellen P. Allerton (1835)

*

YOUR MISSION

∞ If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountain, steep and high,
You can stand within the valley,
While the multitude go by.
You can chant in happy measure,
As they slowly pass along;
Though they may forget the singer,
They will not forget the song ∞

If you cannot in the conflict
Prove yourself a soldier true,
If where the fire and smoke are thickest
There's no work for you to do,
When the battlefield is silent,
You can go with a careful tread;
You can bear away the wounded,
You can cover up the dead.

Do not then stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a lazy goddess,
She will never come to you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare;
If you want a field of labor,
You can find it anywhere.

Ellen M. Gates (1835)

*

THERE IS NO DEATH !

There is no death ! The stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,
And bright in heaven's jewelled crown
They shine forevermore.

There is no death ! The forest leaves
Convert to life the viewless air;
The rocks disorganize to feed
The hungry moss they bear.

There is no death ! The dust we tread
Shall change, beneath the summer showers
To golden grain, or mellowed fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

There is no death ! The leaves may fall,
And flowers may fade and pass away —
They only await, through wintry hours,
The warm, sweet breath of May.

There is no death ! The choicest gifts
That heaven hath kindly lent to earth
Are ever first to seek again
The country of their birth.

And all things that for growth or joy
Are worthy of our love or care,
Whose loss has left us desolate,
Are safely garnered there.

Though life become a desert waste,
We know its fairest, sweetest flowers,
Transplanted into Paradise,
Adorn immortal bowers.

The voice of birdlike melody
That we have missed and mourned so long,
Now mingles with the angel choir
In everlasting song.

There is no death ! Although we grieve
When beautiful, familiar forms
That we have learned to love are torn
From our embracing arms —

Although with bowed and breaking heart,
With sable garb and silent tread,
We bear their senseless dust to rest,
And say that they are “dead”,

They are not dead ! They have but passed
Beyond the mists that blind us here
Into the new and larger life
Of that serener sphere.

They have but dropped their robe of clay
To put their shining raiment on;
They have not wandered for away —
They are not “lost” nor “gone”.

Though disenthralled and glorified
They still are here and love us yet;
The dear ones they have left behind
They never can forget.

And sometimes, when our hearts grow faint
Amid temptations fierce and deep,
Or when the wildly raging waves
Of grief or passion sweep,

We feel upon our fevered brow
Their gentle touch, their breath of balm;

Their arms enfold us, and our hearts
Grow comforted and calm.

And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread —
For all the boundless universe
Is Life — there are no dead !

J. L. McCreery (1835)

*

EVEN THIS SHALL PASS AWAY

Once in Persia reigned a king,
Who upon his signet ring,
Graved a maxim true and wise,
Which, if held before his eyes,
Gave him counsel at a glance
Fit for every change and chance.
Solemn words, and these are they :
“Even this shall pass away.”

Trains of camels through the sand
Brought him gems from Samarkand;
Fleets of galleys through the seas
Brought him pearls to match with these;
But he counted not his gain
Treasures of the mine or main;
“What is wealth ?” the King would say;
“Even this shall pass away.”

’Mid the revels of his court,
At the zenith of his court,
When the palms of all his guests

Burned with clapping at his jests,
 He, amid his figs and wine,
 Cried, "O loving friends of mine;
 Pleasures come, but not to stay;
 Even, this shall pass away."
 Lady, fairest ever seen,
 Was the bride he crowned his queen.
 Pillowed on his marriage bed,
 Softly to his soul he said :
 "Though no bridegroom ever pressed
 Fairer bosom to his breast,
 Mortal flesh must come to clay —
 Even this shall pass away."
 Fighting on a furious field,
 Once a javelin pierced his shield;
 Soldiers with a loud lament
 Bore him bleeding to his tent.
 Groaning from his tortured side,
 "Pain is hard to bear," he cried,
 "But with patience, day by day,
 Even this shall pass away."
 Towering in the public square,
 Twenty cubits in the air,
 Rose his statue, carved in stone.
 Then the king, disguised, unknown,
 Stood before his sculptured name,
 Musing meekly, "What is fame ?
 Fame is but a slow decay;
 Even this shall pass away."
 Struck with palsy, sore and old,
 Waiting at the Gates of Gold,

Said he with his dying breath,
 "Life is done, but what is Death ?"
 Then in answer to the King,
 Fell a sunbeam on his ring,
 Showing by a heavenly ray,
 "Even this shall pass away."

Theodore Tilton (1835)

*

THIS, TOO, SHALL PASS AWAY

When some sorrow, like a mighty river,
 Flows through your life with peace-destroying power,
 And dearest things are swept from sight forever,
 Say to your heart each trying hour :
 "This, too, shall pass away."
 When ceaseless toil has hushed your song of gladness,
 And you have grown almost too tired to pray,
 Let this truth banish from your heart its sadness,
 And ease the burdens of each trying day :
 "This, too, shall pass away."
 When fortune smiles and full of mirth and pleasure,
 The days are flitting by without a care,
 Lest you should rest with only earthly treasure,
 Let these few words their fullest import bear :
 "This, too, shall pass away."
 When earnest labor brings you fame and glory,
 And all earth's noblest ones upon you smile,
 Remember that life's longest, grandest story

Fills but a moment in earth's little while :
"This, too, shall pass away."

Lanta Smith (1836)

*

THERE IS NO UNBELIEF

There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod —
He trusts in God.

There is no unbelief;
Whosoever says beneath the sky,
"Be Patient, heart; light breaketh by and by,"
Trusts the Most High.

There is no unbelief;
Whoever sees 'neath winter's field of snow,
The silent harvest of the future grow —
God's power must know.

There is no unbelief;
Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
Knows God will keep.

There is no unbelief;
Whoever says "tomorrow", "the unknown",
"The future", trusts that power alone
He dares disown.

There is no unbelief;
The heart that looks on when the eyelids close,

And dares to live when life has only woes,
God's comfort knows.

There is no unbelief;
For this by day and night unconsciously
The heart lives by the faith the lips deny.
God knoweth why.

Elizabeth Y. Case (1840)

*

THE GREATEST BATTLE

The greatest battle that ever was fought—
Shall I tell you where and when ?
On the maps of the world you will find it not :
It was fought by the Mothers of Men.

Not with cannon or battle shot,
With sword or nobler pen;
Not with eloquent word or thought
From the wonderful minds of men;

But deep in a walled-up woman's heart;
A woman that would not yield,
But bravely and patiently bore her part;
Lo ! there is the battlefield.

No marshalling troops, no bivouac song,
No banner to gleam and wave;
But, Oh, these battles they last so long—
From babyhood to the grave !

But faithful still as a bridge of stars
She fights in her walled-up town;

Fights on, and on, in the endless wars;
Then silent, unseen goes down !

Ho ! ye with banners and battles shot,
With soldiers to shout and praise,
I tell you the kingliest victories fought
Are fought in these silent ways.

Joaquin Miller (1841)

*

NEW FRIENDS AND OLD FRIENDS

Make new friends, but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold.
New-made friendships, like new wine,
Age will mellow and refine.

Friendships that have stood the test —
Time and change — are surely best;
Brow may wrinkle, hair grow gray,
Friendship never knows decay.

For 'mid old friends, tried and true,
Once more our youth we renew.
But old friends, alas ! may die,
New friends must their place supply.

Cherish friendship in your breast —
New is good, but old is best;
Make new friends, but keep the old;
Those are silver, these are gold.

Joseph Parry (1841)

*

THE CRY OF A DREAMER

I am tired of planning and toiling
In the crowded hives of men;
Heart-weary of building and spoiling,
And spoiling and building again.
And I long for the dear old river,
Where I dreamed my youth away;
For a dreamer lives forever,
And a toiler dies in a day.

I am sick of the showy seeming
Of a life that is half a lie;
Of the faces lined with scheming
In the throng that hurries by.
From the sleepless thoughts' endeavor,
I would go where the children play;
For a dreamer lives forever,
And a thinker dies in a day.

I can feel no pride, but pity
For the burdens the rich endure;
There is nothing sweet in the city
But the patient lives of the poor.
Oh, the little hands too skillful
And the child mind choked with weeds !
The daughter's heart grown wilful,
And the father's heart that bleeds !
No, no ! from the street's rude bustle,
From trophies of mart and stage,
I would fly to the woods' low rustle
And the meadows' kindly page.

Let me dream as of old by the river,
And be loved for the dream alway;
For a dreamer lives forever,
And a toiler dies in a day.

John B. O'reilly (1844)

*

THE VAGABOND

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me;
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river —
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.
Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above,
And the road below me.

Robert L. Stevenson (1850)

*

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

You never can tell when you send a word
Like an arrow shot from the bow
By an archer blind, be it cruel or kind,
Just where it may chance to go.
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,
Tipped with its poison or balm,
To a stranger's heart in life's great mart
It may carry its pain or its calm.

You never can tell when you do an act
Just what the result will be,
But with every deed you are sowing a seed,
Though the harvest you may not see.
Each kindly act is an acorn dropped
In god's productive soil;
You may not know, but the tree shall grow
With shelter for those who toil.

You never can tell what your thoughts will do
In bringing you hate or love,
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings
Are swifter than carrier doves.
They follow the law of the universe —
Each thing must create its kind,
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back
Whatever went out from your mind.

Ella W. Wilcox (1850)

*

THE OSTRICH IS A SILLY BIRD

The ostrich is a silly bird,
With scarcely any mind.
He often runs so very fast,
He leaves himself behind.

And when he gets there, has to stand
And hang about till night,
Without a blessed thing to do
Until he comes in sight.

Mary E. Freeman (1852)

*

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox ?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw ?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow ?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain ?
Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land,
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power,
To feel the passion of Eternity ?
Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns

And pillared the blue firmament with light ?
Down all the stretch of hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this —
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed —
More filled with signs and portents for the soul —
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim !
Slaves of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades ?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose ?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cried protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape,
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes ?

O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this Man ?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world ?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings —

With those who shaped him to the thing he is —
When this dumb Terror shall reply to God,
After the silence of the centuries ?

Edwin Markham (1852)

*

A LITTLE SONG OF LIFE

Glad that I live am I;
That the sky is blue;
Glad for the country lanes,
And the fall of dew.

After the sun the rain;
After the rain the sun;
This is the way of life,
Till the work be done.

All that we need to do,
Be we low or high,
Is to see that we grow
Nearer the sky.

Lizette W. Reese (1856)

*

BE STRONG !

Be strong !
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle — face it; 'tis God's gift.

Be strong !
Say not, "The days are evil; who's to blame ?"
And fold the hands and acquiesce — oh, shame !
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Be strong !
It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not — fight on ! Tomorrow comes the song.

Maltbie D. Babcock (1858)

*

THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the peace of their self-content;
There are souls, like stars, that dwell apart,
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths,
Where highways never ran;
But let me live by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by —
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban;
Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man ∞

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead,
 And mountains of wearisome height,
 That the road passes on through the long afternoon
 And stretches away to the night.
 But still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice,
 And weep with the strangers that moan,
 Nor live in my house by the side of the road,
 Like a man who dwells alone.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road
 Where the race of men go by —
 They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they
 are strong,
 Wise, foolish — So am I.
 Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat
 Or hurl the cynic's ban ? —
 Let me live in my house by the side of the road
 And be a friend to man.

Sam W. Foss (1858)

*

THE FLAG OF PEACE

Men long have fought for their flying flags,
 They have died those flags to save;
 Their long staves rest on the shattered breast,
 They are planted deep in the grave.
 Now the world's new flag is streaming wide,
 Far flying wide and high.
 It shall cover the earth from side to side
 As the rainbow rings the sky.

The flag of the day when men shall stand
 For service, not for fight;
 When every race, in every land,
 Shall join for the world's delight;
 When all our flags shall blend in one,
 And all our wars shall cease,
 'Neath the new flag, the true flag,
 The rainbow flag of peace.

Charlotte P. Gilman (1860)

*

OUT ON THE FIELDS

The little cares that fretted me,
 I lost them yesterday
 Among the fields above the sea,
 Among the winds at play;
 Among the lowing of the herds,
 The rustling of the tress,
 Among the singing of the birds,
 The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what might happen, —
 I cast them all away
 Among the clover-scented grass,
 Among the new-mown hay;
 Among the husking of the corn,
 Where drowsie poppies nod,
 Where ill thoughts die and good are born,
 Out in the fields with God.

Louise L. Guiney (1861)

"PLAY UP ! PLAY UP !"

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night —
Ten to make and the match to win,
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote
"Play up ! play up ! and play the game !"

The sand of the desert is sodden red, —
Red with the wreck of a square that broke, —
The Gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honor a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
"Play up ! Play up ! and play the game !"

This is the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind —
"Play up ! Play up ! and play the game !"

Henry Newbolt (1862)

*

IF —

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream — and not make dreams your
master;
If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them : "Hold on";

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings — nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run —
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son !

Rudyard Kipling (1865)

*

OPPORTUNITY

They do me wrong who say I come no more
When once I knock and fail to find you in,
For every day I stand outside your door
And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wait not for precious chances passed away,
Weep not for golden ages on the wane !
Each night I burn the records of the day;
At sunrise every soul is born again.

Laugh like a boy at splendors that have sped,
To vanished joys be blind and deaf and dumb;
My judgements seal the dead past with its dead,
But never bind a moment yet to come.

Tho' deep in mire, wring not your hands and weep;
I lend my arm to all who say, "I can !"
No shamefaced outcast ever sank so deep
But yet might rise and be again a man. ∞

Walter Malone (1866)

*

FOR THE FALLEN

There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.
They went with songs to the battle, they were
 young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow. ∞
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow
 old :
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them. ∞

To the innermost heart of their own land they are
 known
As the stars are known to the Night. ∞
As the stars that are starry in the time of our
 darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Laurence Binyon (1869)

*

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night. 000

William H. Davies (1871)

*

THE HAMMERS

Noise of hammers once I heard,
Many hammers, busy hammers,
Beating, shaping, night and day,
Shaping, beating dust and clay
To a palace; saw it reared;
Saw the hammers laid away.
And I listened, and I heard
Hammers beating, night and day,
In the palace newly reared,
Beating it to dust and clay :
Other hammers, muffled hammers,
Silent hammers of decay.

• **Ralph Hodgson (1871)**

*

A PRAYER

Let me do my work each day;
And if the darkened hours of despair overcome me,
May I not forget the strength that comforted me
In the desolation of other times.
May I still remember the bright hours that found me

Walking over the silent hills of my childhood,
Or dreaming on the margin of the quiet river,
When a light glowed within me,
And I promised my early God to have courage
Amid the tempests of the changing years.

Spare me from bitterness
And from the sharp passions of unguarded moments.
May I not forget that poverty and riches are of the spirit.
Though the world know me not,
May my thoughts and actions be such
As shall keep me friendly with myself.
Lift my eyes from the earth,
And let me not forget the uses of the stars.
Forbid that I should judge others,
Lest I condemn myself.

Let me not follow the clamor of the world,
But walk calmly in my path.
Give me a few friends who will love me for what I am;
And keep ever burning before my vagrant steps
The kindly light of hope.
And though age and infirmity overtake me,
And I come not within sight of the castle of my dreams,
Teach me still to be thankful for life,
And for time's olden memories that are good and sweet;
And may the evening's twilight find me gentle still.

Max Ehrman (1872)

*

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same;
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day !
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence :
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost (1874)

*

HOLD FAST YOUR DREAMS !

Hold fast your dreams !
Within your heart
Keep one still, secret spot
Where dreams may go,

And, sheltered so,
May thrive and grow
Where doubt and fear are not.
O keep a place apart,
Within your heart,
For little dreams to go !

Think still of lovely things that are not true,
Let wish and magic work at will in you,
Be sometimes blind to sorrow. Make believe !
Forget the calm that lies
In disillusioned eyes.
Though we all know that we must die,
Yet you and I
May walk like gods and be
Even now at home in immortality.

We see so many ugly things —
Deceits and wrongs and quarrelings;
We know, alas ! we know
How quickly fade
The color in the west,
The bloom upon the flower,
The bloom upon the breast,
And youth's blind hour.
Yet keep within your heart
A place apart
Where little dreams may go,
May thrive and grow.
Hold fast — hold fast your dreams !

Louise Driscoll (1875)

*

THE LIFE SHE GAVE

In the dark womb where I began
My mother's life made me a man.
Through all the months of human birth
Her beauty fed my common earth.
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,
But through the death of some of her.

Down in the darkness of the grave
She cannot see the life she gave.
For all her love, she cannot tell
Whether I use it ill or well,
Nor knock at dusty doors to find
Her beauty dusty in the mind.

If the grave's gates could be undone,
She would not know her little son,
I am so grown. If we should meet
She would pass by me in the street,
Unless my soul's face let her see
My sense of what she did for me.

What have I done to keep in mind
My debt to her and womankind ?
What woman's happier life repays
Her for those months of wretched days ?
For all my mouthless body leeches
Ere Birth's releasing hell was reached ?

What have I done, or tried, or said
In thanks to that dear woman dead ?
Men triumph over women still,
Men trample women's rights at will,

And man's lust roves the world untamed.
O grave, keep shut lest I be shamed.

John Masefield (1878)

*

ALONG THE ROAD

I walked a mile with Pleasure;
She chatted all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow
And ne'er a word said she;
But oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me !

Robert B. Hamilton (1880)

*

MORNING COMPLIMENTS

A light little zephyr came flitting,
Just breaking the morning repose.
The rose made a bow to the lily,
The lily she bowed to the rose.

And then, in a soft little whisper,
As faint as a perfume that blows :
"You are brighter than I," said the lily;
"You are fairer than I," said the rose.

Sydney Dayre (fl. 1881)

*

IT COULDN'T BE DONE

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed : "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

Edgar A. Guest (1881)

*

THE THINKER

Back of the beating hammer
By which the steel is wrought,
Back of the workshop's clamor
The seeker may find the Thought —
The Thought that is ever master
Of iron and steam and steel,
That rises above disaster
And tramples it under heel !

The drudge may fret and tinker
Or labor with lusty blows,
But back of him stands the Thinker,
The clear-eyed man who knows;
For into each plow or saber,
Each piece and part and whole,
Must go the Brains of Labor,
Which gives the work a soul !

Might of the roaring boiler,
Force of the engine's thrust,
Strength of the sweating toiler —
Greatly in these we trust.
But back of them stands the Schemer,
The Thinker who drives things through,
Back of the Job — the Dreamer
Who's making the Dream come true !

Bearton Braley (1882)

*

THE OLD SAILOR

There was once an old sailor my grandfather knew
Who had so many things which he wanted to do
That, whenever he thought it was time to begin,
He couldn't because of the state he was in.

He was shipwrecked, and lived on an island for weeks,
And he wanted a hat, and he wanted some breeks;
And he wanted some nets, or a line and some hooks
For the turtles and things which you read of in
books.

And, thinking of this, he remembered a thing
Which he wanted (for water) and that was a spring;
And he thought that to talk to he'd look for, and keep
(If he found it) a goat, or some chickens and sheep.

Then, because of the weather, he wanted a hut
With a door (to come in by) which opened and shut
(with a jerk, which was useful if snakes were
about),

And a very strong lock to keep savages out.

He began on the fish-hooks, and when he'd begun
He decided he couldn't because of the sun.

So he knew what he ought to begin with, and that
Was to find, or to make, a large sun-stopping hat.

He was making the hat with some leaves from a
tree,

When he thought, "I'm as hot as a body can be,
And I've nothing to take for my terrible thirst;
So I'll look for a spring, and I'll look for it *first*."

Then he thought as he started, "Oh, dear and oh,
I'll be lonely tomorrow with nobody here !"
So he made in his note-book a couple of notes :
"I must first find some chickens" and "No, I mean
goats."

He had just seen a goat (which he knew by the
shape)

When he thought, "But I must have a boat for
escape.

But a boat means a sail, which means needles and
thread;

So I'd better sit down and make needles instead."

He began on a needle, but thought as he worked,
That, if this was an island where savages lurked,
Sitting safe in his hut he'd have nothing to fear,
Whereas now they might suddenly breathe in his
ear !

So he thought of his hut^{ooo} and he thought of his
boat,

And his hat and his breeks and his chickens and
goat,

And the hooks (for his food) and the spring (for his
thirst) ^{ooo}

But he *never* could think which he ought to do first.

And so in the end he did nothing at all,
But basked on the shingle wrapped up in a shawl.
And I think it was dreadful the way he behaved—
He did nothing but basking until he was saved !

Alan A. Milne (1882)

*

THE BEAUTY OF DEATH

Unwrap me from this white linen shroud and
 clothe me
With leaves of jasmine and lilies;
Take my body from the ivory casket and let it rest
Upon pillows of orange blossoms.
Lament me not, but sing songs of youth and joy;
Shed not tears upon me, but sing of harvest and
 the winepress;
Utter no sigh of agony, but draw upon my face
 with your
Finger the symbol of Love and Joy.
Disturb not the air's tranquility with chanting and
 requiems,
But let your hearts sing with me the song of
 Eternal life;
Mourn me not with apparel of black,
But dress in color and rejoice with me;
Talk not of my departure with sighs in your hearts;
Close your eyes and you will see me with you
 forever more.
Place me upon clusters of leaves and
Carry me upon your friendly shoulders and
 walk slowly to the deserted forest.
Take me not to the crowded burying ground lest
 my slumber
Be disturbed by the rattling of bones and skulls.
Carry me to the cypress woods and dig my grave
 where violets
And poppies grow not in other's shadow; 000

Let my grave be wide, so that the twilight shadows
Will come and sit by me.
Take from me all earthly raiment and place me
 deep in my
Mother Earth; and place me with care upon my
 mother's breast.
Cover me with soft earth, and let each handful be
 mixed
With seeds of jasmine, lilies, and myrtle; and
 when they will
Grow above me and thrive on my body's element,
 they will
Breathe the fragrance of my heart into space;
And reveal even to the sun the secret of my peace;
And sail with the breeze and comfort the wayfarer.
Leave me then, friends — leave me and depart on
 mute feet
As the silence walks in the deserted valley;
Leave me to God and disperse yourselves slowly,
 as the almond
And apple blossoms disperse under the vibration
 of Nisan's breeze.
Go back to the joy of your dwellings and you will
 find there
That which Death cannot remove from you and me.

Kahlil Gibran (1883)

*

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer (1886)

*

NOT UNDERSTOOD

Not understood. We move along asunder;
Our paths grow wider as the seasons creep
Along the years; we marvel and we wonder
Why life is life. And then we fall asleep —
Not understood.
Not understood. We gather false impressions,
And hug them closer as the years go by,
Till virtues often seem to us transgressions;
And thus men rise and fall, and live and die —
Not understood.

Not understood. Poor souls with stunted vision
Oft measure giants by their narrow gauge;
The poisoned shafts of falsehood and derision
Are oft impelled 'gainst those who mould the age—
Not understood.

Not understanding. The secret springs of action
Which lie beneath the surface and the show
Are disregarded; with self-satisfaction
We judge our neighbor, and they often go —
Not understood.

Not understood. How trifles often change us !
The thoughtless sentence or the fancied slight
Destroys long years of friendship, and estranges us,
And on our souls there falls a freezing blight —
Not understood.

Not understood. How many breasts are aching
For lack of sympathy ! Ah, day to day
How many cheerless, lonely hearts are breaking !
How many noble spirits pass away —
Not understood.

O God ! that men would see a little clearer,
Or judge less harshly where they cannot see;
O God ! that men would draw a little nearer
To one another; they'd be nearer Thee —
And understood.

Thomas Bracken

*

LOVE

I love you,
Not only for what you are,
But for what I am
When I am with you.

I love you •
Not only for what
You have made of yourself,
But for what •
You are making of me.

I love you
For the part of me
That you bring out;
I love you
For putting your hand
Into my heaped-up heart
And passing over
All the foolish, weak things
That you can't help
Dimly seeing there,
And for drawing out
Into the light
All the beautiful belongings
That no one else had looked
Quite far enough to find.

I love you because you
Are helping me to make
Of the lumber of my life
Not a tavern
But a temple;

Out of the works
Of my every day
Not a reproach
But a song ∞

You have done it
Without a touch,
Without a word,
Without a sign.
You have done it
By being yourself.

Roy Croft

*

A PRAYER FOR EVERY DAY

Make me too brave to lie or be unkind.
Make me too understanding, too, to mind
The little hurts companions give, and friends,
The careless hurts that no one quite intends.
Make me too thoughtful to hurt others so.

Help me to know
The inmost hearts of those for whom I care,
Their secret wishes, all the loads they bear,
That I may add my courage to their own.
May I make lonely folks feel less alone,
And happy ones a little happier yet.

May I forget
What ought to be forgotten; and recall
Unfailing, all

That ought to be recalled, each kindly thing,
Forgetting what might sting.

To all upon my way,
Day after day,
Let me be joy, be hope ! Let my life sing !

Mary C. Davies

*

LULLABY TOWN

There's a quaint little place they call Lullaby Town —
It's just back of those hills where the sunsets go down.
Its streets are of silver, its buildings of gold,
And its palaces dazzling things to behold;
There are dozens of spires, housing musical chimes;
Its people are folk from the Nursery Rimes,
And at night it's alight, like a garden of gleams,
With fairies, who bring the most wonderful dreams.

The Sandman is Mayor, and he rules like a King.
The climate's so balmy that, always, it's spring,
And it's never too cold, and it's never too hot,
And I'm told that there's nowhere a prettier spot;
All in and about it are giant old trees,
Filled with radiant birds that will sing when you please;
But the strange thing about it — this secret, pray,
keep —

Is, it never awakes till the world is asleep.

So when night settles down, all its lights snap aglow,
And its streets fill with people who dance to and fro.
Mother Goose, Old King Cole and his fiddlers three,

Miss Muffet, Jack Sprat and his wife, scamper
free,

With a whole host of others, a boisterous crew,
Not forgetting the Old Lady Who Lived in a Shoe
And her troublesome brood who, with brownie and sprite,
Go trooping the streets, a bewildering sight.

There's a peddler who carries, strapped high on
his back,

A bundle. Now, guess what he has in that pack.
There's a crowd all about him a-buying his wares,
And they're grabbing his goods up in threes and in pairs.
No, he's not peddling jams nor delectable creams.
Would you know what he's selling ? Just
wonderful dreams !

There are dreams for a penny and dreams that
cost two;

And there's no two alike, and they're sure to come true;
And the buyers fare off with a toss of the head,
And they visit the Sandman, then hie them to bed;
For there's nothing to do in this land of Bo-Peep,
But to frolic and sing and then go off to sleep !

John I. Diller

*

THE BRIDGE-BUILDER

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and grey,
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim —
That sullen stream had no fears for him;
But he turned, when he reached the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a pilgrim near,
"You are wasting strength in building here.
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way.
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide;
Why build you the bridge at the eventide?"

The builder lifted his old grey head.
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
"There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been nought to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He too must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for *him*."

Will A. Dromgoole

*

THE SEED

How does it know,
this little seed,
if it is to grow
to a flower or weed,
if it is to be
a vine or shoot,
or grow to a tree
with a long deep root ?

A seed is so small;
where do you suppose
it stores up all
of the things it knows ?

Aileen Fisher

*

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE SON

Do you know that your soul is of my soul such a part,
That you seem to be fiber and core of my heart ?
None other can pain me as you, dear, can do,
None other can please me or praise me as you.

Remember the world will be quick with its blame
If shadow or stain ever darken your name.

"Like mother, like son" is a saying so true
The world will judge largely the "mother" by you.

Be yours then the task, if task it shall be,
To force the proud world to do homage to me.

Be sure it will say, when its verdict you've won,
"She reaped as she sowed. Lo ! this is her son."

Margaret J. Grafflin

*

ANY WIFE OR HUSBAND

Let us be guests in one another's house
With deferential "No" and courteous "Yes";
Let us take care to hide our foolish moods
Behind a certain show of cheerfulness.

Let us avoid all sullen silences;
We should find fresh and sprightly things to say;
I must be fearful lest you find me dull,
And you must dread to bore me any way.

Let us knock gently at each other's heart,
Glad of a chance to look within — and yet
Let us remember that to force one's way
Is the unpardoned breach of etiquette.

So shall I be hostess — you, the host —
Until all need for entertainment ends;
We shall be lovers when the last door shuts,
But what is better still — we shall be friends.

Carol Haynes

*

REWARD

All day I did the little things,
The little things that do not show;
I brought the kindling for the fire,
I set the candles in a row,
I filled a bowl with marigolds —
The shallow bowl you love the best —
And made the house a pleasant place
Where weariness might take its rest.

The hours sped on, my eager feet
Could not keep pace with my desire.
So much to do, so little time !
I could not let my body tire;
Yet, when the coming of the night
Blotted the garden from my sight,
And on the narrow, graveled walks
Between the guarding flower stocks
I heard your step; I was not through
With services I am meant for you.

You came into the quiet room
That glowed enchanted with the bloom
Of yellow flame. I saw your face,
Illumined by the firelit space,
Slowly grow still and comforted —
"It's good to be at home," you said.

Blanche B. Kuder

*

'HAPPINESS

Happiness is like a crystal
Fair and exquisite and clear,
Broken in a million pieces,
Shattered, scattered far and near.
Now and then along life's pathway,
Lo ! some shining fragments fall,
But there are so many pieces
No one ever finds them all.

You may find a bit of beauty,
Or an honest share of wealth,
While another just beside you
Gathers honor, love or health.
Vain to choose or grasp unduly,
Broken is the perfect ball;
And there are so many pieces
No one ever finds them all.

Yet the wise as on they journey
Treasure every fragment clear,
Fit them as they may together,
Imaging the shattered sphere,
Learning ever to be thankful,
Though their share of it is small;
For it has so many pieces
No one ever finds them all.

Priscilla Leonard

*

SHOES HAVE TONGUES

Shoes have tongues,
But cannot talk;
Tables have legs,
But cannot walk.
Needles have eyes,
But cannot see;
Chairs have arms,
But they can't hug me !

Ilo Orleans

*

THE COMMON ROAD

I want to travel the common road
With the great crowd surging by,
Where there's many a laugh and many a load,
And many a smile and sigh.

I want to be on the common way
With its endless tramping feet,
In the summer white and winter gray,
In the noonday sun and heat.

In the cool of evening with shadows nigh,
At dawn, when the sun breaks clear,
I want the great crowd passing by,
To ken what they see and hear.

I want to be one of the common herd,
Not live in a sheltered way,

Want to be thrilled, want to be stirred
 By the great crowd day by day;
 To glimpse the restful valleys deep,
 To toil up the rugged hill,
 To see the brooks which shyly creep,
 To have the torrents thrill.

 I want to laugh with the common man
 Wherever he chance to be,
 I want to aid him when I can
 Whenever there's need of me.

 I want to lend a helping hand
 Over the rough and steep
 To a child too young to understand —
 To comfort those who weep.

 I want to live and work and plan
 With the great crowd surging by,
 To mingle with the common man,
 No better or worse than I.

Silas H. Perkins

*

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